

7-16-2010

W. Beaumont [Washington, DC] to Joseph Lovell, Surgeon General, regarding: physical examination and physical defects of recruits, remuneration of examining physicians. April 6, 1835

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### Recommended Citation

W. Beaumont [Washington, DC] to Joseph Lovell, Surgeon General, regarding: physical examination and physical defects of recruits, remuneration of examining physicians. April 6, 1835. Beaumont, William. Bernard Becker Medical Library Archives. Washington University School of Medicine, Saint Louis, Missouri. [http://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/beaumont\\_1835/11](http://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/beaumont_1835/11)

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wants to enlist - but, they <sup>undoubtedly may</sup> have some "little defect" or  
slight disease, about them - such as varicose veins - small  
ulcers on the skins - ~~hemorrhoids~~ - diseased testis - incipient  
consumption - constricted stomach - obscure haemorrhoids - chronic  
rheumatism, confirmed drunkenness - defective stamina - Prolapsus of  
chord & tendons &c &c - all appear very slight &  
of no kind of consequence <sup>in the estimation of</sup> the off<sup>r</sup> - the men  
say they never trouble them any - the off<sup>r</sup> believes  
they will not hurt them for 3 years: & sends them  
to the Doct<sup>r</sup> for <sup>sympptoms</sup> ~~examination~~ - The Dr examines - <sup>perhaps</sup> sees the  
defects & doubts - hesitates - asks the men if it ever  
hurt them any - <sup>they answer</sup> ~~answer~~ "no" - The off<sup>r</sup> urges  
his belief that <sup>it will not</sup> ~~will not~~ injure them <sup>for many years</sup> -  
in 3 yrs - The Dr, to please the off<sup>r</sup>, & agreeably acquiesces  
himself of that particular case, lashes his mind into  
the own erroneous belief & passes the "slightly  
defectives" <sup>for enlistment</sup> ~~into service~~ & he is turned into the Rendezvous,  
Kept some 8, 9, or 10 mos, merely to learn how to take  
the soldiers position, hold a musket, <sup>grapple</sup> ~~fight~~ a few  
hours a day. & keep his clothes & accoutrements clean &  
know how to put them on - all this time no complaint  
is heard of his infirmities, but no sooner is he sent off  
to join a Reg<sup>t</sup>. & is put to duty, & becomes <sup>suffering</sup> ~~exposed~~ to the  
fatigues & hardships of the active duties of a Soldier's  
life - he becomes sick, & dreads a good for nothing - his  
"slight defects," become now serious & painful - new ones  
perhaps are developed - <sup>he becomes</sup> a standing ward  
on the sick report & is either discharged for these  
self same "slight defects" ~~or~~ <sup>or</sup> remains  
a perpetual Hospital Patient for the remainder of  
his enlistment. if he do not die before with the  
original disease, with which he enlisted. ~~with~~ not



only not having done two months duty during his term  
but has required the services of an <sup>able-bodied</sup> efficient soldier half  
the time to nurse & attend him in Hospital, & costing the  
government as much as the ~~most~~ efficient soldier  
in the Army - <sup>to me</sup> now. by the value of the amt  
of medical & Hospital done & that have been bestowed  
upon them - And thus it is, our Army is fast  
becoming a corps of invalids - <sup>including</sup> our Hospitals are  
attempts, for the ~~field~~, disease & rampant vagabondage  
of all civil communities - and the medical officers  
are <sup>pauper</sup> ~~managers~~ curators, ward-tenders, & charity doctors. instead  
of Surgeons of a valiant, active & efficient Army of  
vigorous, sound & able soldiers - <sup>as is found to be</sup> this ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> drawn from every part. For 15 years I have  
seen it becoming more & more corrupted every season.  
And for the last 12 mos. it has been incredibly so  
[to the Hqs of Depts at W.] - so at the posts where I have  
stationed in the Western Departments of the Army -

The different examinations reports the recruits have  
to undergo, & the conflicting <sup>opinions</sup> contradictory views & opinions  
of the several medical examiners. officers at Boards, before  
which they are required to pass in review, no doubt  
causes much uncertainty, confusion, & error of decision  
& causes much vexation, ~~frustrated~~ <sup>increased</sup> ~~incredibly~~ & dissatisfaction  
at Genl Head Qrs.

All these difficulties, singularities might  
easily be corrected & remedied uniform & satisfactory  
by a judicious modification of the present system.







that for every man found deficient & rejected at the time of the final exam<sup>n</sup> & attachment, with sufficient indications of the defects having existed at the time of his first exam<sup>n</sup> \$50 should be deducted from the compensation, with the usual drawbacks now required by regulations.

To secure the payment of this forfeiture - one half the amt due the Exam<sup>r</sup> Dr. should be held in reserve till after the Board <sup>had passed</sup> his last exam<sup>n</sup> & was <sup>re-spectively</sup> accepted - into service.

This plan I think would have the effect to correct <sup>& reprehensible manner</sup> that carelessness ~~of particularity~~ of exam<sup>r</sup>. & obliqueness of judgement, now so prejudicially prevalent at some of our military ~~institutions~~. Let the same time be sufficient encouragement to induce complete medical men of character & respectability to engage in the performance of such duties.

This plan <sup>would</sup> also exactly appportion the compensation to the services rendered & guarantee the government against the heavy expenses now incurred by engagement on contracts, per Mo. whether the services rendered be good, bad or indifferent - beneficial or prejudicial to government - <sup>in general</sup> ~~some times~~

If additional compensation should <sup>be demanded</sup> for personal attendance after the exam<sup>n</sup>. let a definite sum per Mo be specified in the contract for every occasion that may require medical attendance after the 1<sup>st</sup> Mo.



This plan would afford ample compensation in exact propor-  
tion to the service rendered. & at the same time operate as  
an <sup>incentive</sup> ~~incentive~~ to attention & carefulness and <sup>deserve</sup> ~~deserve~~ a caution to care-  
less men & inattentive - The more sound, efficient men  
be passed, the greater his compensation. & every defective  
one would be a proportional drawback -

~~Five good men a mo. at \$5~~ Every tolerably good Physician  
will afford an average number of 10 recruits per mo.

which at \$5. each would offer the Exam. I \$50. per mo. -  
I can add sum of \$1. per mo. for each recruit <sup>for every one he</sup> ~~that~~ might  
be detained after the 1<sup>st</sup> mo. of their respective enlistment,  
would be ample compensation <sup>to the ally Physician</sup> for taking the  
responsibility of sending medical aid to the Poor  
Party & the <sup>Recruits</sup> ~~Officers~~ <sup>without apt choice</sup> ~~other~~ recruits parties whom  
they might become sick? - Thus if he examined 20  
monthly. & they are what the government anticipate  
sound healthy men. I am not sick at all. he gets his  
\$50. for barely examining them & signing their certifi-  
cates - Should any be retained after the 1<sup>st</sup> mo. he  
gets his addl sum of \$10 a head - sick or not sick -  
<sup>If he pass a bad one, it deducts from his pay & saves the Gov. the trouble</sup>  
<sup>of examining him</sup> ~~if he examines with 1 month a mo. & he remain~~  
in health. he gets his five dolls for a few minutes  
time and trouble - & so the same proportion con-  
tinues in regular ratio. be the numbers more or less.  
& serves to <sup>operate</sup> ~~form~~ a self regulating system. of  
equity & liberal encouragement to the good stock &



Reminders for revision  
 & copy at luncheon  
 April 6, 1835

The policy would afford a...  
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